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STUDENT REPORT

BILLY MITCHELL'S CONCEPT OF COMMAND
LEADERSHIP AND THE RELEVANCE FOR
AIR FORCE OFFICERS

MAJOR M. J. MASTROMICHALIS 86-1630
"insights into tomorrow"

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REPORT NUMBER 86-1630

TITLE BILLY MITCHELL'S CONCEPT OF COMMAND LEADERSHIP AND THE
RELEVANCE FOR AIR FORCE OFFICERS

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of
requirements for graduation.

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Following graduation from the Citadel in 1973, Major Michael J. Mastromichalis completed Undergraduate Pilot Training at Moody AFB, GA. After pilot training, Major Mastromichalis attended the B-52 Combat Crew Training Course (CCTS) at Castle AFB, CA. He was assigned to Grand Forks AFB, ND after completion of CCTS and spent 1975-1979 flying the B-52 as a copilot. In 1979, he was assigned to Robins AFB, GA, and upgraded to aircraft commander in the B-52. Major Mastromichalis has over 2000 hours in the B-52 and more than 2700 hours total flight time.

Major Mastromichalis was assigned to Squadron Officer School (SOS) in 1982. He was a section commander for four classes and was responsible for teaching junior officers leadership, force employment issues, officership, and communication skills. Later he worked as Chief, Research Branch for one year, and Chief, Plans Branch for two years.

Major Mastromichalis has a BA in History from The Citadel, an AA in Criminal Justice from Minot State College, and an MPS from Auburn. His professional military education courses are SOS by both correspondence and in residence, Marine Corps Command and Staff by correspondence, ACSC by seminar, and is currently attending ACSC in residence.



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REPORT NUMBER 86-1603

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR MICHAEL J. MASTROMICHALIS, USAF

TITLE BILLY MITCHELL'S CONCEPT OF COMMAND LEADERSHIP AND THE RELEVANCE FOR AIR FORCE OFFICERS.

I. Purpose: To determine what Billy Mitchell's concept of command leadership is and determine if there is relevance for Air Force officers.

II. Problem: Billy Mitchell is considered by many to be the father of the modern Air Force. Yet, if officers in the contemporary Air Force were to act like Mitchell did, they would find themselves in trouble. Nevertheless, Mitchell had a concept of command leadership and traits which are needed by all soldiers to be effective leaders. The scope of this paper is to determine these aspects and present them.

III. Conclusion: Mitchell's leadership attributes and concept of command leadership are identifiable and have relevance for today's Air Force officer.

PREFACE

This paper will first examine the life of General William Mitchell and key events and people who influenced his career. Secondly, the author develops the classical military command leadership model and determine what was Billy Mitchell's concept of this model. Finally, the author determines if Mitchell's concept of leadership in the classic has relevance for today's Air Force officer.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On April 18, 1942, Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle flew the first of sixteen B-25 Mitchell medium bombers off the aircraft carrier Hornet. His mission, shrouded in secrecy for many months, was to attack and bomb the Japanese mainland. The United States needed a victory--any victory--to bolster the sagging morale of our nation and armed forces. Doolittle's raid was designed to infuse a sense of hope into our country and demonstrate to the Japanese that we were not finished. The Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 had been a tremendous success. Our fleet in the Pacific suffered severe damage, which opened the door for a rapid succession of easy Japanese victories giving them control of much of the Pacific. Mitchell bombers would not do much physical damage to the Japanese but they would do irrevocable harm to the spirit of the Japanese people. Japan would no longer feel a sense of invulnerability, of total superiority--essentially they would realize that the war had finally been brought to them (4:181-204).

It was fitting that the aircraft used to bomb Japan was the Mitchell bomber. Twice General William (Billy) Mitchell had gone on inspection tours of the Far East and had predicted that war between the United States and Japan was inevitable. Both in 1909-1911 and in 1924 Mitchell visited Japan, and had drawn the same conclusions both times that Japan was the dominant nation in Asia and was ready to do battle against the United States over grievances shared by all Asiatics (3:86). His findings were controversial and not readily accepted by his superiors. Mitchell, during his brilliant but temptuous career, often spoke his mind despite repercussions or official censures.

Mitchell's bold, outspoken, and rebellious personality did not sit well with his superiors. Eventually Mitchell's actions which included the controversial sinking of a battleship by aerial bombardment, and violent attacks on the War Department and Navy, earned him a court-martial and a five year dismissal from active duty.

Billy Mitchell died in 1936, but his influence on the Army Air Corps could be seen years after his passing. The Army Air Corps, in spirit, vindicated the name of Mitchell by naming a bomber after him. Furthermore, those who were to command during WWII realized that Mitchell was right in many instances: that air power should be a separate branch, that airpower was the wave of the future, and to overcome obstacles and win wars took bold, strong, and innovative leadership.

General William Mitchell influenced a generation of American leaders. Men such as Doolittle, Eaker, Spaatz, Twining, and LeMay were all young officers when Mitchell was an outspoken proponent of air power. Repeatedly during the 1920s and 1930s, Mitchell was on the national scene. His actions often got front page billing in such newspapers as The New York Times or on radio shows or even in articles to be found in Field and Stream magazine. Published and outspoken Mitchell had a profound influence on those he came into contact with.

He inspired a generation of airmen - among them Arnold, Tooey Spaatz, Ira Eaker, Harold George, Frank Andrews, George Kenney, and Jimmy Doolittle. All were to become air leaders in World War II and who were guided by Mitchell's precepts. Mitchell's followers completed his quest for organizational independence, acceptance of the dominant position of air power in deterring or fighting a war, and recognition of its place as a major instrument of American foreign policy (12:166).

For many years the author has been closely associated with leadership, either while being led by others or while in leadership positions myself. In the author's opinion, there is one unrefutable truth about leadership--leadership can be learned from others. The study of leadership and what constitutes good leadership is absolutely essential to the United States Air Force. Our very existence and survival in wartime depends on the quality of our officer corps and the ability of our officers to exercise command leadership. Since the 1960s, management theory has been espoused in place of command leadership principles. For example, Management by Objective (MBO) and Program Evaluation Review Technique have been used by the military to evaluate situations and determine courses of action. As a young lieutenant in a bomb wing in 1975, the author was briefed by our wing commander on how our wing would soon be managed by the principles of MBO. Thoroughly confused by this substituting of management theory for

leadership principles, I was not sure if my commander could lead if we had to go to war. According to Dr Donald L. Chipman, noted lecturer on leadership; recently military studies have degenerated into the memorization of management theories and heavy doses of communication feedback principles interwoven with counseling techniques. These lessons are then linked to some form of social-psychological model designed to provide the officer with a list of leadership do's and don'ts. "Know your job," "be enthusiastic" and other such descriptions characterize most of the military leadership lessons. Seldom, if ever, are the concepts of war, "danger," and uncertainty included in these presentations. For instance, in Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership, a compendium of well over 800 pages, not once is the term "war" used. Somewhere in the rush to promote zero defects, to increase managerial effectiveness, the military has substituted contemporary quasi-psychology and business leadership models for the classical combat command models (15). While the author was on the faculty of SOS for three and one-half years, and at ACSC, many speakers, including Air Force general officers, have remarked that we must move away from a managerial officer corps and stress the warrior-leader concept. A program instituted by the Air Force to move the officer corps away from managerialism, and in the direction of combat leadership is Project Warrior. One aspect of Project Warrior is designed to examine leaders of the past and use them as examples of what leaders should be or what attributes they had which made them effective leaders. One of these leaders was Billy Mitchell.

CHAPTER TWO

GENERAL MITCHELL: CAREER AND KEY EVENTS

Billy Mitchell had the kind of career most military men dream of. Many aspire to achieve the greatness Mitchell did--most fall short. Twice he was the youngest officer in grade in the U.S. Army. First as a lieutenant and the second time as a captain. In two short years he went from lieutenant colonel to the rank of general. Mitchell traversed the globe during his career; he fought in the Philippines and in France, he was sent to Alaska to string a telegraph, and visited the Far East on inspection tours to assess the military development in the area. Furthermore, he was also known around the world and achieved a certain celebrity status. Essentially, he associated with many of the great personalities of the early twentieth century. Orville Wright, Pershing, Summerall, MacArthur, and Patton all knew him as did Lindberg and Rickenbacker. His genius was evidenced by ideas that were put into action and proved to be tremendously successful. For example, during WWI he was one of the first to use aircraft to strike behind enemy lines at supply depots. It was one of the first times air power was used to cut off and isolate a battlefield from supply or reinforcement (12:158-166). In WWII and later, this battlefield tactic would prove to be of tremendous importance. Mitchell was a man of vision who had a far reaching impact on the development of air power in the United States.

William Mitchell, born on 29 December 1879, was destined for greatness. He undoubtedly had the success ethic instilled in him from a very early age. According to his biographer, Alfred F. Hurley, "Mitchell's life began in a successful setting of financial and political achievement. The drive, ambition, courage and occasional ruthlessness of the nineteenth-century entrepreneur were qualities which, in large measure, described Billy himself" (3:2). Courage was one of Mitchell's key traits. During his third year at college, Teddy Roosevelt and his exploits in Cuba prompted Mitchell to join the Army Signal Corps. Too late to be bloodied in Cuba, Mitchell volunteered to go to the Philippines and take part in the American operations against the rebel forces trying to overthrow the Philippine

government. Participating in several battles with the insurgent rebel forces, Mitchell thrived on the excitement of conflict. Ready for more action, the young lieutenant left the hot steamy jungle climate for the cold and barren wilderness of Alaska. Alaska was experiencing a gold rush in the early part of this century and the entire Alaskan area was beginning to open up and herds of people were going there. To maintain contact with the newly opened wilderness, a telegraph line was needed. It was considered impossible to string the wire due to many factors; particularly because of the debilitating cold and vast distances to cover. General A. W. Greeley, Signal Corps commander, needed an officer to lead an expedition to Alaska and string the telegraph wire. He chose Billy Mitchell (8:60-64). Mitchell tackled the seemingly insurmountable task and by 1903, after two years in Alaska, the telegraph line was in place.

The combination of Cuba, the Philippines and his duty in Alaska convinced Mitchell to stay in the Army. In 1903, the United States was at peace, and Mitchell would spend the next thirteen years in various staff assignments. What these assignments lacked in excitement, he made up for by learning more about his profession. His first assignment after Alaska was to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, which was considered the intellectual center of the Army. After Leavenworth came a rapid series of assignments to the School of the Line, the Staff College, the Philippines, and finally, duty on the Army General Staff in 1912. Of these duties perhaps the most important, or controversial, was his duty in the Philippines. While there he was sent on undercover reconnaissance tours of Japanese military activities during the years 1910-1912 (3:10-13). Mitchell's report on the Japanese military activities indicated they had expansionistic desires, that the Philippines were at peril and war with Japan was inevitable (3:13). Mitchell's candor and lucid foresight at such a young age impressed many of his superiors, but a pattern was beginning to develop in his personality. Mitchell, bold and courageous, was willing to speak out on issues and to the devil with the consequences. Eventually his propensity or flair for the dramatic would spell his undoing.

Mitchell did not become interested in flying until the age of 36 (he soloed in 1916). He immediately volunteered to go to France because he believed America would soon be in the war--he proved to be correct. When he first arrived in France, Mitchell went to see Major General Hugh Trenchard. Trenchard at the time commanded the British air forces in France and was lauded as a visionary in the employment of aircraft. "Trenchard was for organized attack on enemy planes by formation of aircraft designed for the purpose. But he was also, even in that early

time, a champion of strategic bombing" (1:65). Mitchell was impressed by Trenchard and his theories, but most of all Mitchell was impressed by Trenchard's willingness to stand up for what he believed in. Most of all perhaps, Billy Mitchell saw the future pattern of his own career, for that was Trenchard's pattern. We all, at some point in our lives, are inspired by someone, by some spoken or printed word toward a life path.

Mitchell became a convert during WWI to the concept of air supremacy. Mitchell saw the stagnated battlefields and dreamed of ways to break up the wasteful combat of WWI. He wanted to use the airplane to disrupt the enemies' supply lines and destroy his front line troops. Mitchell got the opportunity to employ his newly developing theories on airpower during the St Mihiel offensive in 1918. Mitchell massed up to 1,500 aircraft during the offensive, and used these aircraft to destroy enemy supply lines, airfields, and harass frontline forces. For the first time in history airpower was used to isolate the battlefield. Mitchell was extolled as a hero by General Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Force. Again, later the same year, in the Battle of the Argonne Forest, Mitchell's tactics were used and with tremendous success (5:120-145).

With battlefield success proving the role of airpower for the future, Mitchell was confident and ready to return to the United States and champion the course of airpower. When the war was over and Mitchell returned to America, he fully expected to be named head of Military Aviation. Mitchell was to be cheated out of the command of the air service. The War Department appointed a cavalry officer, Charles T. Menocher, as the chief of the air service and Mitchell as the assistant chief (8:199). Of course this perturbed Mitchell, but with his characteristic zeal he went on knowing he would eventually be named chief of the air service. Not being appointed as the first chief of the air service confirmed in Mitchell's mind that only he saw the future and true role airpower would play.

In 1921, F. D. Roosevelt, Secretary of the Navy, asked Mitchell to appear at the Navy General Board and present his ideas about future air policy. Mitchell did, but in the process began to alienate many of the power holders in government (2:51). Mitchell wanted the Air Service to achieve equal status with the other two services and wanted a Department of Defense with three equal services under it. He also wanted vast improvements in the armaments of the Air Service. Mitchell requested that the Army build aircraft carriers, develop torpedoes and better bombs and develop larger caliber machine guns with more lethal

projectiles (2:53). Essentially, he wanted to make the airplanes of his time more effective as weapons systems by employing better technology. His concept in the 1920s still holds true today--you must stay abreast of technology and employ it. Few of these ideas were his own, but no one else made an effort to collect them, force them upon the Army's attention or embody them into a concept of the needs of airpower. Mitchell saw his suggestions ignored. So he decided to take his concepts and ideas to the American public (2:54). He wanted to educate them on the strengths of airpower and prove that airpower and not seapower would win wars in the future. Mitchell believed too much money was being wasted on building large and extremely vulnerable battleships. While "the system of education" was at work, Mitchell tried to do what he could to keep the Air Service a meaningful force. During 1921, Congress cut the Army from 280,000 to 150,000 men. The Air Service portion of that cut was not so bad proportionately as that which the other arms suffered but its enlisted personnel dropped from 16,000 to a little more than 10,000 (3:63). Mitchell could see the handwriting on the wall; the Air Service was being reduced to a bare bones force. Eventually, the entire air arm would be deleted from the budget and would cease to exist. Mitchell needed a grandstand play to stop the budget cuts of the Air Service and even reverse the trend. He wanted a showdown with the Navy--he wanted to prove the vulnerability of the battleship (5:168-172).

The sinking of the Ostfriesland was the beginning for airpower in this country, but it was also the beginning of the end of Mitchell's career. To prove the superiority of the airplane over the battleship, Mitchell and the Navy entered into a series of tests. These tests were to be conducted at sea, and carried out by aerial bombardment of surface ships. One by one Mitchell sank all the ships which the Navy put out for him to fly against. At first Navy officials had laughed at Mitchell's exhortations that he could sink anything which the Navy put to sea. But there was one last chance for the Navy--the unsinkable captured German battleship, the Ostfriesland. Mitchell had this to say about the Ostfriesland:

Looking down on her, she appeared like a bulldog where the Frankfurt had looked like a swan. She was sullen and dark and we knew we had a tough old nut to crack. She was tight as a drum, light, only drawing 28 feet of water, when loaded she drew about 35. We had already proved that we could sink any other ship except a battleship . . . still all this would be forgotten if we failed to kill, bury, and to cover up the Ostfriesland (5:238-239).

Mitchell knew he had to sink the Ostfriesland for the future of airpower rested on this one airstrike. Using 2,000 pound bombs on 21-22 July 1921, Mitchell and his aircraft sank the Ostfriesland and silenced his opposition. Not only did Mitchell's actions help the Army, it indirectly did a great service to the Navy. "The Navy leaders had now become aviation conscious. Congress voted the money for a conversion of two battle cruisers into the carriers Lexington and Saratoga, collectively the cornerstone of American naval aviation."
(3:72-72)

Essentially, Mitchell at this time was at the pinnacle of his career. He had just proved his theory of aerial bombardment correct and had sent the Navy brass scurrying in an attempt to protect their budget allocations. Additionally, the country was in love with him. Mitchell's name was everywhere--newspapers, radios, and on the street corner. He was bold and innovative and respected. But all good things eventually seem to end and Mitchell's career was on the decline even if he did not realize it.

Mitchell visited the Far East on an inspection tour in 1924. Of prime interest to him was Japan; he saw Japan as our rival for the Western Pacific. Mitchell saw many examples of anti-American hostility while on his inspection tour of Japan. He even perceived that this hostility was played up by the press and encouraged by the ruling class (2:168). Mitchell predicted war with Japan and even predicted that it would start at Pearl Harbor. His assertion brought him into disfavor with the Army and the U.S. State Department. He established a pattern which would last not only the rest of his career, but up until his death in 1936. In an intensely parochial institution such as the U.S. Army in the 1920s, freedom of expression--especially on viewpoints held to be against the institutions best interest are anathema. Mitchell was not the "organizational man." He was a maverick intensely disliked by many of his superiors. Mitchell would never keep quiet; he was always making waves and causing problems. To Mitchell, he was being a good officer--to his enemies, he was just a lot of trouble and they wanted him removed. By 1923, Army aviation had hit rock bottom. Underfunded and undermanned, Mitchell decided unilaterally to make this known to the public and hopefully national attention would force the administration to divert funding to the aviation branch. Mitchell began to attack both the War and Navy departments with hard hitting articles in national publications such as the Saturday Evening Post. As time passed, Mitchell's attacks became stronger and harsher. Eventually the administration could no longer tolerate him.

When Secretary of War Weeks called him to account for his attacks on the War and Navy Department, Mitchell even then would not let up. He challenged the integrity of the Navy's leadership by saying to Weeks: "In my opinion, the Navy actually tried to prevent our sinking the Ostfriesland." He was in trouble when he charged before the Lampert Committee that witnesses for other viewpoints were "in some cases" responsible for "possibly a falsification of evidence, with the evident intent to confuse Congress (3:95-96).

His campaign brought him into disfavor and he was eventually reduced in grade to colonel and sent to Ft Sam Houston in Texas. Essentially, this was a punishment tour. He was given a relatively simple assignment and many in Washington hoped he would keep quiet and stay out of the limelight. This was not the case. Mitchell continued to be outspoken and attacked the administration as being lax in the defense of the U.S. To his somewhat surprise, charges were brought against him and in a two month court-martial Mitchell was found guilty of conduct bringing discredit upon the military service. Mitchell decided to resign from the Army in 1926 (3:103-108). Mitchell died in 1936 and never saw the culmination of his work. Much of what he fought for eventually came to pass and he is considered by many to be the founder of our Air Force as it exists today.

CHAPTER THREE

MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE CLASSIC AND MITCHELL'S CONCEPT OF IT

Military leadership has existed since the beginning of time. Earliest man fought his neighbor over the desire for territory, wealth, or to exert his influence on others. The need for leadership evolved out of the need to have leaders. There must be men in both civilian and military endeavors who are concerned with the greater issues: peace, defense of nation, economics, and the well being of society. Without effective leadership, there can not be attainment of the greater issues and as such leadership to society, as a whole, is absolutely essential.

Entire books, studies, and military courses are devoted entirely to the examination of military leadership. For example, over 4000 junior officers are sent each year to Squadron Officer School (SOS) to practice and learn effective leadership techniques. Nearly forty percent of the SOS curriculum is devoted exclusively to teaching leadership. Checklists are posted on walls, lists of what it takes to be effective leaders are memorized, and books about famous leaders are read and later briefed to each student officer in the hope that they will discover what leadership is and become leaders. David P. Campbell in the book Contemporary Issues in Leadership has this to say about the nature of leadership. "Leadership has an elusive, mysterious quality about it. It is easy to recognize, hard to describe, difficult to practice, and almost impossible to create in others a demand." (9:xiii) Campbell is citing a well known fact; leadership is often undefinable and often difficult to impart to others. Attempts to categorize leadership and make the study of it into a science has often had less than favorable results. Furthermore, according to Campbell, ". . . there is no single, dominant theory to help understand the multi-faceted concept of leadership." (10:xiii) This is basically true; if you ask any two "experts" on leadership to define the concept of leadership you will get two different answers. No one seems to be able to determine exactly what leadership is or what are its essential traits. One attempt to define leadership is by the Air Force in AFP 35-49. "Leadership is the art of influencing

and directing people to accomplish the mission. The basic concept the effective leader must keep in mind encompasses two fundamental elements: the mission and the people." (14:2) With this definition in mind, AFP 35-49 continues to explain the mission and the people and also gives traits and principles. If you follow or have these traits and principles, it stands to reason you will be an effective leader and be of use to both the Air Force and the country. Yet, this attempt to define leadership and provide a checklist to follow on "how to" be an effective leader appears to be too simplistic an approach. Leadership is too complex and misunderstood to simply publish checklists to follow in the hope that the officer corps will read, comprehend, and use the principles to be effective leaders. You must go one step further. To understand leadership you must understand its source and how it evolved. Essentially you have to understand the concept of military leadership in the classic.

Leadership in the military classic must first be understood before the leadership of others can be analyzed in relation to this model. The component parts of classical military leadership are identifiable and able to be examined--they are not a mystery and can be seen and practiced by all officers. Essentially leadership in the military classic is:

The leader (leadership) influences others to accomplish the mission (military) by certain principles which have held true and have stood the test of time (classic).

When you examine the span of history--particularly military history, there are great leaders who stand out. Men like Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Robert E. Lee, Douglas MacArthur all come to mind because of their military exploits as a result of their leadership ability. Each one from a different era, a different country, but of a similar nature--successful military leaders all (10:1-4). These leaders and others were successful not because they memorized leadership principles and then in turn practiced the principles. These great leaders understood the concept of military leadership in the classic and used it to their advantage. These men were able to define their goals, marshal their forces, and then with a characteristic zeal attack and achieve their goals.

In his ACSC student report, The Heroic Leader: A Role for the Eighties, Captain Paul A. Bauer states that the behavior patterns of leaders tended to exhibit seven key characteristics or traits. These traits are experience, technical competence,

innovation, courage, sense of mission, compassion, and vision (16:6-17). Bauer based these seven traits on a study/analysis of the careers of Eaker, Doolittle, and LeMay. All three are accepted as leaders and used as role models for others to study and pattern themselves after. Once again a checklist of traits is drawn up and if followed it stands to reason the officer will be like one of these leaders and in-turn become a great leader himself.

Just teaching leadership principles will not ensure great leadership. Often having the right tools to work with is not enough. In order to be a successful leader, you need not only the tools (traits of leadership) you also must have a conceptual environment. This conceptual environment will give the tools a sense of direction, purpose, and mission. One classic example of this conceptual environment is Robert E. Lee's concept when he stated, "Duty is the sublimest word in the English language." Lee's statement gives form to his leadership ability. Lee believes that to be a successful leader, you must perform your duty whatever it may be. You must always try to do your duty and use your leadership traits to do your duty. The military leader in the classic must have a conceptual framework to guide his actions. Attempts at "checklist leadership" will only provide a partial solution to the problem of searching for successful leadership.

Billy Mitchell was a great military leader and he set the example for several decades of officers who would go on to become the leaders during World War II. Yet, his concept of military leadership in the classic is difficult to determine because Mitchell, though a prolific writer, seldom discussed concepts of leadership. Mitchell was a technician and spent most of his time devising either new tactics to employ weapons or strategy to use as a guide for the weapons he helped develop. Col William Yancey, in his AWC report of 1953 stated, "His [Mitchell's] ability to recognize the potential value of technological advancement and to methodically plan its fullest exploitations set him apart . . ." (19:71). Mitchell's classic works, Winged Defense (1925), and Skyways (1930) were basically technically oriented books on airpower and its development and employment. Mitchell had his "mission" in life and it was as a proponent of airpower. Mitchell led by example and had key leadership traits which are very observable and form a conceptual framework from which he operated. Mitchell had four key leadership traits which particularly stand out. They were discipline, technical expertise, loyalty to his men, and finally bravery.

Discipline was essential to Mitchell. Without discipline

a military organization would collapse and a soldier would not be able to function. He believed that rigid discipline was needed to keep a military organization operating. During his two years in Alaska (1901-1903) Mitchell established a telegraph line across Alaska. To overcome the great distances, freezing temperatures, and logistics problems Mitchell had to employ strong discipline. The men under his command in Alaska and from then on would realize that Mitchell believed in discipline as the cornerstone of an effective military unit (17:1-200). Additionally, Mitchell's mentor General A. W. Greely believed in strong discipline with your men. Mitchell chronicled, in his book General Greely: The Story of a Great American, an experience which Greely had during an Arctic expedition. Greely caught one of his men stealing food during the expedition. To maintain the discipline of the unit, Greely had the man executed (6:123-152). Greely's action had a profound and lasting impact on Mitchell's concept of leadership and the essential quality of discipline.

Mitchell also believed it was of tremendous importance to technically know your job. Mitchell was always looking for ways to improve the state of aviation. He collaborated with Major Alexander P. deSeversky on many projects to improve aviation and Mitchell's technical expertise was outstanding. For example, he was instrumental in the development of the artificial horizon and the azimuth-gyro, both important to air navigation (11:179-185). Mitchell considered technical expertise very important because being a good officer meant improving your discipline. Since he was an aviator, this meant searching for methods to improve aviation. Yet, as an aviator he was not really a good pilot. According to Gill Robb Wilson, "I never heard any pilot say Bill was a good pilot. To this day I have never heard a soul who knew anything about it say Bill Mitchell was a good pilot. But boy! There were damned few pilots who didn't think he was number-one boy in the thinking business" (18:79). Mitchell stressed the technical aspects over the physical ability to do the mission. He believed understanding how things worked was more important than their actual operation.

Also essential to good leadership was the need of a commander to have loyalty to his men. Mitchell realized in order to accomplish the mission the people in the unit had to be taken care of. During his Alaskan adventure and service in Europe during WWI, the men in his units were treated fairly and looked after. For example, in the fledgling Army Air Corps, in the 1920's the rank structure of the officers flying aircraft was much lower than in the other branches of the Army. Mitchell

realized this was impacting on the morale of his men. Flying airplanes was dangerous work and his aviators were demoralized due to fewer promotions than the other service branches. Furthermore, the manner the other branches treated the Air Corps was affected by the low promotion rate. The Air Corps was being treated like the "weak sister" of the Army. Mitchell wanted this changed and told the Army so in a hearing held in 1921 (13:29). deSeversky had this to say about Mitchell, ". . . he was of the breed of men who translate visions into realities, and though in military matters he was determined to the point of appearing ruthless, he was always kind and considerate of his men" (11:182).

Finally, Mitchell believed that bravery or courage was an essential quality of leadership. To lead you must understand the conditions which your men will encounter. Mitchell never held back, considered to be brave, almost reckless, he wanted to ensure his understanding of combat. He would never ask his men to take part in or do anything he was unwilling to do himself. Certainly Mitchell knew that danger and death were inherent in the profession of arms. His experiences in Cuba, the Philippines, Alaska, and WWI had proved that to him. To be prepared to face the danger a leader must have courage. If a leader has courage his men will sense this and be more willing to follow him into combat. Mitchell continually sought ways to sharpen his courage, he thought that the more you experienced danger the more used to it you become. For example, during WWI Mitchell volunteered to participate in a French infantry attack prior to United States entry to the war. The attack was very dangerous and the French gave Mitchell the Croix de Guerre for his part in the battle. Yet, the medal was not as important as the experience he derived from his involvement in the dangerous operation (7:32-47).

Mitchell's key traits of leadership which essentially were discipline, technical expertise, loyalty to your men, and courage were useful tools. These tools contributed greatly to his success as a leader, but did not totally provide all which was necessary. Mitchell needed a conceptual framework from which to guide his actions. Military leadership in the classic was best evidenced by Mitchell's concept of it. Mitchell as well as other great military men have had this principle of military leadership in the classic. Mitchell's was total dedication to cause of mission. It can also be called singleness of purpose. Mitchell's entire military career was an example of his total dedication to his mission in life. Every undertaking he was ever involved in was characterized by a strength, a zeal, a singleness of purpose which was uncanny. No matter what setbacks occurred he never let events sidetrack him

from achieving his final goal. Mitchell used his key attributes of leadership effectively and relied on his total dedication to his mission to see him through. The best example of his singleness of purpose was his final battle with the Army, Navy, and War Departments which led to his court-martial and eventual dismissal from the service.

Mitchell's theories on air power had largely gone unheeded by the Navy, Army, and War Department. He was convinced that the U.S. was falling behind the rest of the world in aviation and eventually the safety of the country would be at stake. Mitchell's sense of duty to country forced him to verbally attack the opponents of airpower. Eventually he was court-martialed for his verbal attacks on the administration and released from active duty (3:90-109). Mitchell knew exactly what he was doing when he started to attack the administration over his airpower theories. He did it deliberately and was mildly surprised by the terms of his court-martial--he expected his punishment to be far worse (18:29). Mitchell's concept of leadership in the classic was the same as many great men before him. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Napoleon all have the same characteristic quality of total dedication to their mission in life. It is this principle which illuminates Mitchell's leadership and made him a great man. Gill Robb Wilson had this to say about Mitchell:

Billy Mitchell was one of those guys who had a self-discipline more powerful than any discipline he was under. His oath was to his country. Anything that stood between him and the fulfillment of that oath wasn't a discipline: it was a handicap. He didn't mean to be insubordinate against discipline. He had the sternest of disciplines. He pursued his ends as relentlessly as Socrates drank the poisoned hemlock, and for exactly the same reasons "to thy own self. . ." that was his criterion (18:79).

It was Mitchell's total dedication to his country which forced him to throw his career away and be court-martialed. He felt compelled because other methods had not worked and his ideas on airpower had to be adopted.

CHAPTER FOUR

DOES MITCHELL'S CONCEPT OF MILITARY LEADERSHIP IN THE CLASSIC HAVE RELEVANCE FOR TODAY'S AIR FORCE OFFICER?

Mitchell's concept of military leadership in the classic does have relevance for today's Air Force officer. Total dedication or singleness of purpose are very important factors and apply to all soldiers of any time frame. Mitchell was totally dedicated to his theories on airpower and knew they were right. Eventually our nation would suffer in battle if we did not adopt his ideas and he knew it. Mitchell was a visionary but his vision was of no value unless others heard what he had to say. His total commitment to having his ideas adopted is what made the difference. Without his inner strength and conviction his concepts on airpower would have been wasted. Just recently the Sgt York Divisional Air Defense Gun was cancelled as a new major weapons system for the Army. The system was found to be unable to perform the role expected of it, yet not a single Army officer spoke against the system prior to its cancellation by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. This example brings to mind Mitchell's resignation speech:

The United States remains today unorganized for national defense. This condition is due to the blind opposition of the Army and Navy bureaucracies that have abrogated to themselves the policy of standing squarely in the way of progress; and constantly advocating the theories of the bow and arrow men of a barbarous age. Calling to their aid the instrumentalities of propaganda and unorganized control, they have consistently and purposefully mislead Congress and the people as to what this country needs to insure its security. They have entrenched themselves behind a bureaucratic system, run by self-perpetuating oligarchies (20:1).

Mitchell's example of self-sacrifice can well be used today. He was willing and did throw his career away because he loved

his country and was totally dedicated to its preservation. Mitchell "fell on his sword" for a good cause and there are causes worth self-sacrifice. Because of the example he set in 1926, officers for the last sixty years have had someone to look to for guidance when their were tough decisions to make.

Furthermore, Mitchell's four tools of leadership are as relevant today as they were in his era. Using discipline to maintain an effective fighting force, technical expertise, loyalty to your troops, and having courage are all essential to a good officer. But, like Mitchell these traits must also be combined with a conceptual framework to be successful.

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